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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 004981

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: THE ANBAR SECURITY COUNCIL: RECENT NEGOTIATIONS

REF: A. A) BAGHDAD 4733

[B. B\) BAGHDAD 4788](#)

[C. C\) BAGHDAD 4830](#)

[D. D\) BAGHDAD 4935](#)

[E. E\) BAGHDAD 4915](#)

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY ROBERT S. FORD, POLITICAL COUNSELOR FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1. \(C\) Summary.](#) This is a SET Ramadi cable. A recently created council of influential Anbaris in Ramadi known alternatively as the Ramadi or Anbar Security Council has brought together local officials (from the professional or technocratic class), ex-military officers, imams and tribal sheikhs. MNF-I officers now meet this group regularly to discuss security issues. For the most part, the group is a successful forum for Coalition Forces and Anbaris alike. Discussions are frank and productive. The members are growing more sophisticated in their arguments and positioning. The last meeting of the Council was closed-door. Participants must now move beyond word to actions to stand up the Anbar ISF. This cable traces the history of the engagement, beginning with the release of a minor imam and analyses the participants of each of the Council's factions, in order of their relative weight within the group. End Summary.

[12. \(C\)](#) Unprecedented progress in Sunni engagement marked the last half of November and the first weeks of December in the troubled province of Anbar. In retrospect, it appears the November 13 release of Imam Sheikh Jalal to the (informal) recognizance of the Governor and Sunni Endowment head Sheikh Dhaher broke the dam and ushered the recent period of frequent and high-level negotiations with a broad and significant group of local influencers. A timeline of significant events includes:

November 20: Senior Religious Leaders Resume Dialogue Begun late July (Ref A)

-Anbar Sunni Endowment leader Sheikh Dhaher
-Muslim Ulema Council Sheikh Thamir

November 28: Conference Proposed by Imams Draws 200 Participants
-Designated Members Anbar Security Council (Ref B)

December 1: First Meeting of Anbar Security Council
-Received IECI representative (Ref C)

December 6: Anbar Military Council/ISF Commanders (Ref D)

December 8: Anbar Security Council (Ref E)
-Discussed Election Preparations

December 10: Anbar Security Council Holds Internal Coordination Meeting
-Considered Proposals to include more Al Anbaris in the 7th IA Division
-Requested Further Details Re: Present Composition of 7th Division

[13. \(C\)](#) As with most Sunni political operations, the field is filled with contentious and distrustful rivals. A summary of the factions follows:

Technocrats

Led by the Governor Ma'moon Sami al Rasheed al Alwani, the technocrats -- loosely affiliated with the Iraqi Islamic Party -- won a stark majority of the 2,800 votes cast in the January 30 Provincial election. Governor Ma'moon is a strong personality, equipped with meticulous attention to detail and an engineer's penchant for technical solutions. He consistently derides, in private, the relevance and potency of tribal sheikhs, yet seems to have an easy rapport with Anbar's religious leaders. His closest allies on the Anbar Security Council appear to be Engineer Hamid Abed Muhammed, a Ramadi City Council member (and the governor's recent representative at IECI meetings in Baghdad) and a local businessman, Sayid Hamid Mateh. At the December 6 meeting, Sayid pressed for the re-opening of several schools near the Huriya Police Station in Ramadi. (Note. Iraqi Police abandoned the Huriya Police Station in

early November, shortly afterward the Public Order Battalion (P.O.B.) took control of the premises. Parents attribute the school's closure to the MoI unit's aggressive defensive posture in the facility. End Note.) Sayid stated he had organized a community group demanding wider access to the schools; the group later met with CF and P.O.B. commanders and largely resolved access issues. Dr. Abed Muhammed al-Jumayli identified himself last session as the secretary of the Council. He mentioned he was a lecturer at the College Agriculture in east Ramadi and had started an NGO to address environmental issues.

Iraqi Islamic Party Faction of the Technocrats

14. (C) Provincial Council Chairman Khidir Abdel Jabar Abaas is criticized by some as weak and usually defers to Ma'moon's lead. A deeply religious (he, unlike Ma'moon, will excuse himself from a meeting to pray) and quiet man, he proudly described his seven accomplished children, in particular his daughter, who scored extremely high marks in the college entrance exam last spring. He has failed to induce the Provincial Council to meet of late, citing logistical challenges and intimidation as barriers. His deputy, Dr. Abdel Salam al-Ani only participated in the kick-off conference on November 28. His absence in subsequent meetings is puzzling, and may be due to a rivalry with the governor. A former dean of Anbar's Medical School, al-Ani was shot in the stomach shortly after liberation. He is brother to Deputy Minister of Industry and Minerals, Mohammed, and told PolOff that 'the American enemy' had shot their 80 year old father in Qaim on November 23. Both Khidir and al-Ani openly acknowledge their leadership roles in the IIP. Al-Ani notes that his position as party leader made him the number one target for the Zargawi network.

Former Military Officers

15. (C) Anbar has no shortage of retired or dismissed Saddam-era military officers. Anbar Security Council member former General 'Sa'ab' (evidently his nom de guerre -- aptly Arabic for 'difficult') al Rawi claims to represent 6,500 Anbari former officers, including 60 former generals. Anbar Sunni Endowment head Sheikh Dhafer Mohammed Awad Obaydi recommended including ex-military officials in the November 28 conference; he suggested that Ma'moon identify and invite the officers for inclusion. General Sa'ab immediately proved to be a vocal and passionate proponent of the former regime military's role in the new Iraq. He has attempted earlier negotiations, and carries with him a document outlining the creation of an Anbar Iraqi Army division that he claimed was endorsed by former Minister of Defense Hazam Sha'alan. In December 8 meeting, the Council became less permissive of his domination of earlier discussions. He may have served as a convenient straw man for the most radical initial negotiating position. Abd al-Ali and Muthar al-Qubaisy are also ex-military. Sa'ab has been openly dismissive of al Ali, the diminutive former artillery general. For example, he suddenly disengaged when al-Ali broke into our conversation, only to wave PolOff over afterward to speak privately. Muthar, also a vociferous proponent of Anbari ex-military representation in the Iraqi Security Forces, in a sidebar, sought better security in the vicinity of Anbar University where his wife is employed.

The Imams

16. (C) Sheikh Dhafer, complete with bullet wounds through his shoulder from the attack in a mosque in July, has participated actively in recent Provincial Reconstruction and Development Council meetings, but only reported to the December 8 Security Council meeting. He and Muslim Ulema Council's Sheikh Thamir Ibrahim Dharer al Assafi, originally shared a reasoned program for standing up Anbar's Iraqi Police Force. Most recently, Dhafer complained bitterly of the national Sunni Endowment's leader's alleged announcement that the Anbar provincial office of the religious administration would move from Ramadi to Falluja. Dhafer said simply he'd quit if this edict were enforced. Sheikh Thamir is the most interesting participant to watch, extremely at ease with tall frame, and-- often wearing a sardonic smile -- exudes influence. His arguments are reasoned, if tinged with fear. He has repeatedly raised the dangers they believe religious leaders face from Zargawi's operatives. The most senior of the Anbari imams, the elderly Yassin Muslfin al-Hambadi of Hit, has not participated since the November 28 meeting.

The Sheikhs

17. (C) Dapper and westernized Sheikh Anwar Kharbit is by far the most active participant in recent Council meetings. His mild and banal admonishments of the IECI or MoD recruiting practices (with regard to the 7th division) are often in support of Ma'moon's proclivities. Sheikh Hatem Abd al Razzak, commands due respect for his position in the tribal hierarchy, but either his youth (appears much younger than his reported age of early 30's) or lack of inspiration lead to his mute participation. Other senior Ramadi sheikhs, including Adnan Khamees Almohana, appear to bridle at Ma'moon's iron-fisted control over the Council's agenda and period for comment. Ma'moon's own tribal leader, Jumah Khalaf al-Ghaoud, has not returned since the December 1 meeting. Sheikh Faisal Nijris al-Ghoud and three minor Albu Nimr sheikhs joined the December 8 Council belatedly, and, apparently, without invitation.

18. (C) Ma'moon seized the opportunity to chastise those who conduct independent negotiations in Baghdad. This was apparently a direct slap at Sheikh Faisal, who has reportedly met with both the Minister of Defense and the IECI to speak on behalf of Anbar. Sheikh Khalid Ibrahim Najif (albu Jabil), also listed as a participant in the MoD's outreach efforts, is more closely aligned with Ma'moon and echoes the governor's position in the Council. Dr. Nasir abd al Karim Mukhlif al-Fahdawi, is reputedly an influential leader. He was appointed to the Council but has not attended. He is currently in Amman.

Comment

19. (C) The Council's membership is fluid. On December 8, there were a number of gate crashers. Several minor sheikhs and grey-faced ex-military crowded into the governor's office, although they were not allotted speaking time. For the most part, the group is a successful forum for CF and Anbaris alike. Discussions are frank and productive. The members are growing more sophisticated in their arguments and positioning. The last meeting of the Council was closed-door. Participants must now move beyond word to actions necessary to stand up the Anbar ISF. End Comment. KHALILZAD